



The Icon of Thirumalai Nayak, Hindu Bakthi Revival: A Study

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Abstract: *As we have seen above, Hinduism was the religion of the Vijayanagar kings, and their cultural mission was to promote it in order to restore it from the devastation it had suffered during Islamic dominion. The majority of the Vijayanagar emperors were Vaishnavites, and the Nayaks were mostly Vaishnavites as well, but there is no evidence that the other Hindu religions were harmed in any way. They built both Saiva and Vaishnava temples, and both were equally well equipped. The Vaishnava schism – Vadakalai and Tenkalai – emerged during this time, culminating in the teachings of Tenkalai Acharya Manavala Mamunigal (late 14th century), who was inspired by Pillai Lokacharya in the 13th century. With its denominational and doctrinal distinctions from the other school (the Vadakalai), the Tenkalai tradition has been more Catholic and less orthodox, and has aided in the universalization of Vaishnavism.*

Keywords: *Hindusim, Vaishnavism, Vadakalai, Tenkalai, Vijayanagar Rulers.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Temples are cultural, social, political, and economic institutions as well as places of religious interest. Devotees are instilled with divinity and purity when they worship gods at temples. A temple festival was a time of great social celebration, with people flocking from the neighbouring cities and villages to join in the fun. Thirumalai Nayak raised money by forgoing festival celebrations and ordering that one-fourth of the total budget be spent on temple construction. By consulting Nilakanada Dikshitar, his minister and an expert in Sastras and other Sthanikars, he made arrangements for the holding of four main festivals and various minor festivals each year.

Chithirafestival

The Chithirai festival is the most important of all the Madurai festivals. The marriage of Meenakshi and the vehicle festival were held in the month of Masi prior to the Thirumalai



Nayaks' reign. Masi Streets were the streets along which the temple automobile procession of deities passed. The Masi festival was moved to the month of Chithirai by Thirumalai Nayak. The reason for the shift is that Masi falls during harvest season, which is when farmers are most active. The roadways were extended to suit the needs of the perambulating deities and Vahanas, to avoid the problem of low reaction from the people who were to perform the Chithirai festival. From the days of Thirumalai Nayak, who transferred the perambulation to Masi streets and paid 1000 gold coins as an inducement whenever the deity passed by, the Chithirai streets utilised for the Chithirai festival have given up their claim. During the Masi Car Festival, the streets were enlarged.

The main festival was Thirukkalyanam, celebrated for ten days and concluding with the big car festival. On the eighth day, we celebrate the coronation of Meenakshi Amman. Till the year 1622 AD, it was the custom for kings to place the sceptre before their family deity and take it from there. But during the reign of Thirumalai Nayak, a change was made in this coronation festival. The Sthanikars handed over the sceptre to Thirumalai Nayak, which was brought by him in a procession from the place to the temple. Before his time, it was a custom for Kallalagar of Thirumalirunjchola to come up to Thenur, near Paravai, on the full moon day of Chithirai to bless the Manduka Maharishi. Thirumalai Nayak changed the Alagar halt from Thenur Mandapam to Vandiyur near Madurai. It would have been an attempt to synchronise both the festivals of the Madurai Temple and the Alagar to create a good impact.

The Meenakshi temple is the geographic and ritual centre of Madurai's historic city. The temple walls and city streets were constructed first. The city walls were then erected in concentric squares around the temple. This century's physical expansion was repurposed as a ritual expansion, linking the surrounding territories to the city. This is referred to as "synoecism" by Paul Wheatley. This process lowers the local deities and other equally strong deities, such as the Alagar of Alagarkovil, to the sacred center's temple. The Chithirai festival is the clearest example of this trend of ceremonial expansion.

Vasantotsavam

Vasantotsavam was celebrated for ten days during the Tamil month of Vaikasi (May–June). This happened in the pudumandapam, which is also known as the Vasanta Mandapam. The mandapam is said to have been built in the sweltering month of May as a delightful retreat for the deity Sundara-Linga. As a result, he has been given the name Vasanta (spring). Thirumalai Nayakar built the Pudu Mandapam to honour the Vasantha festival between 1628 and 1635.

The Pankuni festival is a Kodai Vasantam. The deities originally, on a concluding day, visited Tiruppuvanam, twelve miles from Madurai. The deities returned the same night to the temple, in keeping with the age-old tradition that "Chokkar rath-thangar", which means that the Utsava Chokkar never stayed out of the temple during the night. During the reign of Thirumalai Nayak, Vaigai was inundated, and the deity could not be returned to the temple in accordance with tradition. Thirumalai Nayak announced a special reward to those who dared to bring the deity to Madurai despite the devastating flood when this feat was accomplished by a group of villagers. He donated a village called Saminatham to them. To avoid this contingency from then on, on the tenth day, Chokkar visited the Thiruvapputaiyyar temple on the northern banks of the river Vaigai at Madurai.

Avani Moola Festival



Throughout the festival, many occurrences from the Thiruvilaiyadal tales are depicted. These culminate in Pittukku Man Sumanda leelai in Pittuthoppu, where the king himself participated as the Pandyan King.

Teppotsavam Festival

Teppam is Tamil for "float," and Teppotsavam is the festival of the "float." In most of the temples of the South, particularly in Tamil Nadu, the float marks the conclusion of the prime annual temple festival and it is celebrated with as much pomp and éclat as the Brahmostavam. The month of Thai is in the sign of Capricorn (Maharam). The natal star of Thirumalai Nayak is the pusam of this month and the monarch, to perpetuate its memory, arranged the Teppotsavam festival. For this purpose, he constructed the lovely tank called the Mariamman Teppakulam, about 3 km to the east of Madurai in 1635. It measures 345 metres by 290 metres and has stone steps flanked by animal and bird balustrades leading down to the water in the middle of each side. A sixteen-columned pavilion with a pyramidal tower stands on an island at the center; it is capped with a kuta roof. Portrait sculptures adorn the four central columns; slabs cut into the shape of arched openings are placed in between smaller but similar pavilions that mark the island's four corners. He donated to Thidian Puttur, a village to celebrate the float festival. He appointed Poovantha Pandaram and Peddhavaraiya Dhikshitar, his Guru, to supervise the temple activities.

At the time of digging the tank, a large-sized Vinayaka or Pillayar was unearthed. This Mukkurani Pillayar was installed in the Southern Prakara of the Somasundar Shrine of the Meenakshi Temple. A very large Kolukkattai is prepared using 18 kg of rice flour and distributed as a sacrament. This system continues to this day. Thirumalai Nayak ordered the celebrations of other festivals like Navarathiri, Karthikai, etc., and made Madurai the city of festivals.

2. CONCLUSION

The Nayaks revived the Hindu Bakthi Movement after the **Nayanmars** and **Alwars**, through their religious activities, the revival of rituals, festivals, and the renewal of Hindu morals and philosophies. Humanism was given priority over religion. The Nayak kings were not all aggressors but only reformers; on the other hand, they were cruel in imposing law and order and also in collecting taxes. Such attitudes by the Nayaks enabled their subjects to be rule-oriented. Thus, Thirumalai Nayak was placed in history as the most illustrious ruler of the Madurai Nayaks. He was a man of remarkable abilities. He had left an imperishable name in the history of Madurai. He was great in the fields of war, diplomacy, art, and architecture. He had the capacity to rule various groups impartially.

3. REFERENCES

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